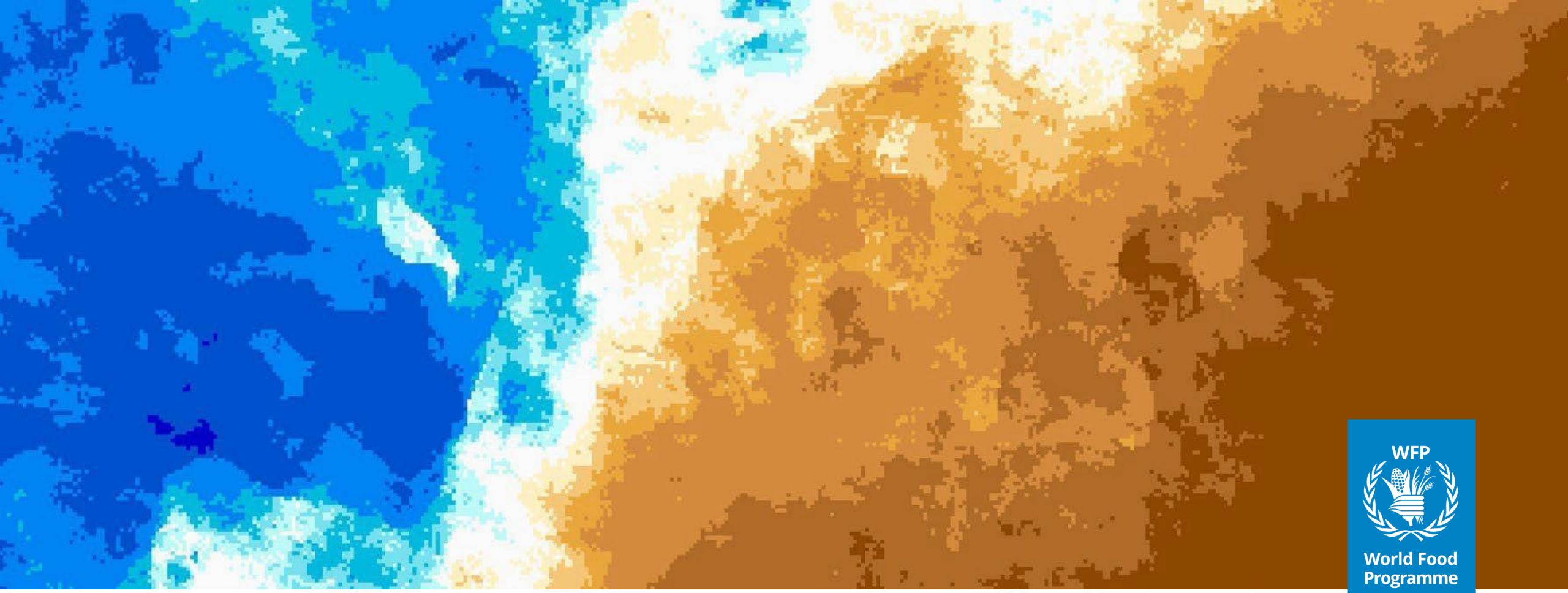


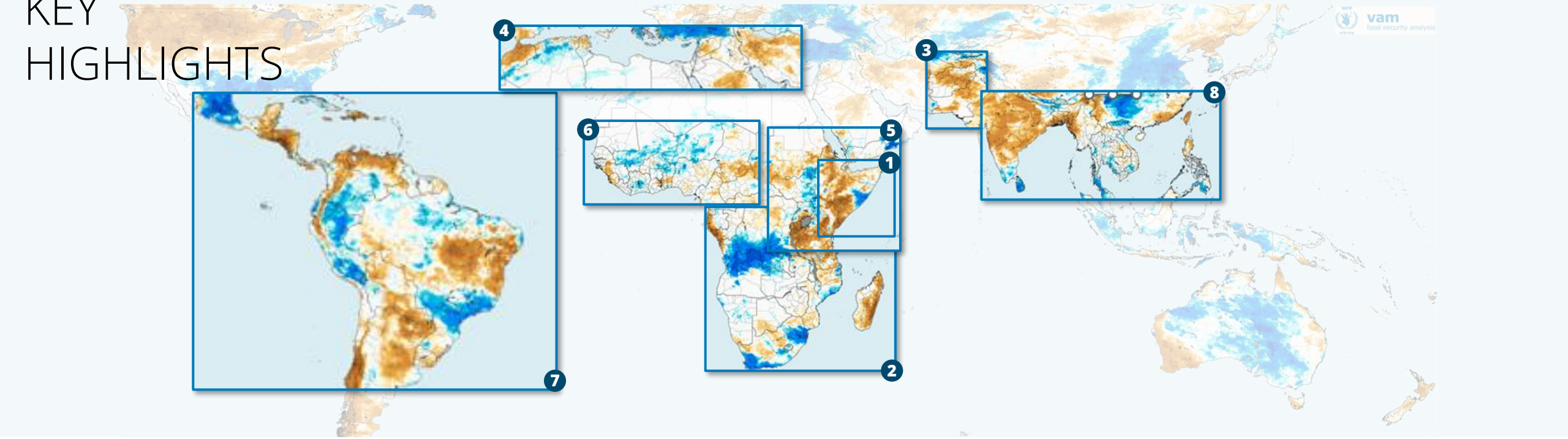
Global Seasonal Outlook

2026 May

WFP
World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

KEY HIGHLIGHTS



Regions are ordered to reflect the seasonal progression — from areas currently in-season to those where the rainy season is expected to begin:

1 HORN OF AFRICA

Dryness

The rainy season started on a generally positive note, but rainfall became more erratic in April. Dry conditions are expected to persist across parts of Ethiopia and Kenya, and particularly in Somalia, raising concerns about potential impacts on crops, pasture, and water availability.

2 SOUTHERN AFRICA

Overall, a favourable harvest outlook is expected despite localized concerns, following a season marked by generally above-average rainfall and multiple successive hazards. Likely El Niño conditions may lead to below-average rainfall in the 2026–27 season, threatening rainfed agriculture and highlighting the need for early preparedness and mitigation measure.

3 CENTRAL ASIA

Dryness Flood

Above-average temperatures are expected to accelerate snowmelt and reduce water storage in the coming months, raising concerns about reduced water availability later in the dry season and increasing the risk of localized flash floods.

4 MENA

Dryness

Rainfall improved across much of the Middle East and North Africa during the season, supporting crops and water availability. Overall, seasonal conditions show partial recovery, with remaining challenges in parts of Middle East.

5 EAST AFRICA

Drought

Rainfall in Eastern Africa has shown a mixed start, with good early conditions in some areas but ongoing deficits in Sudan and western South Sudan. Seasonal forecasts suggest a higher likelihood of below-average rainfall, which could negatively affect overall agricultural performance.

6 WESTERN AFRICA

Dryness

The rainy season has begun unevenly across the Gulf of Guinea, though prospects remain favourable. In the Sahel, the rainy season is just beginning, with seasonal forecasts indicating an increased risk of below-average rainfall. This raises concerns for crop establishment and overall agricultural performance.

7 LATAM

Drought Cyclone

Seasonal forecasts indicate an increasing risk of below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures across Central America and the Caribbean during the Primera season. The likely transition toward El Niño conditions may contribute to a less active hurricane season.

8 SOUTH & SE ASIA

Drought Cyclone

Forecasts indicate increasing risks of below average rainfall and above average temperatures during the onset of the monsoon season across parts of South Asia, while tropical storm activity may become more active across the eastern Pacific.

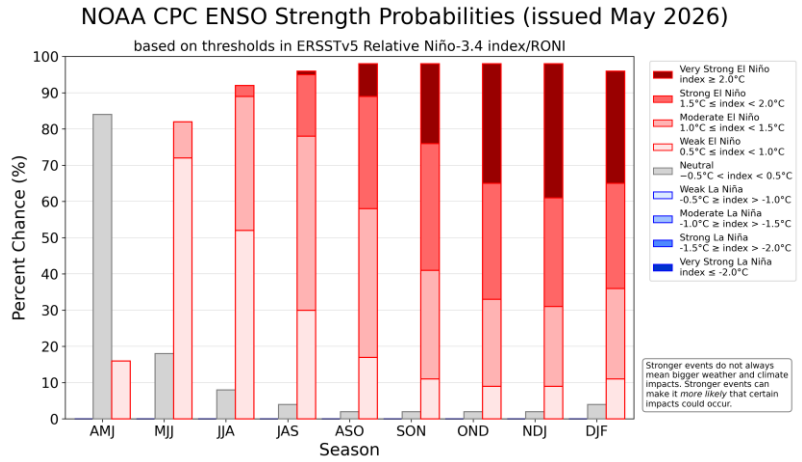
ENSO OUTLOOK

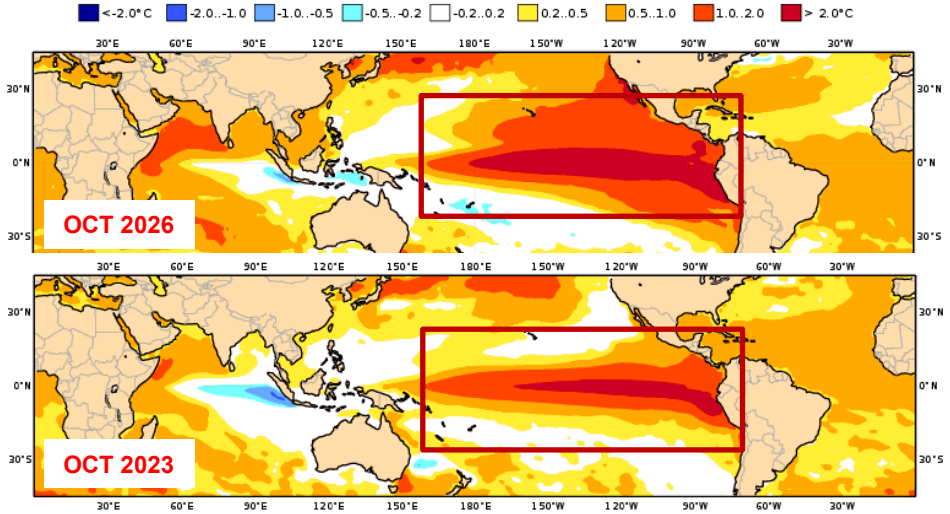
ENSO-neutral is present and a transition to El Niño is expected during May to July. During this period, El Niño is likely to emerge (82% chance) and persist through at least the end of 2026.

SPECIAL FOCUS

El Niño Outlook – May 2026

Forecasts indicate 82% chance that El Niño conditions will develop between May and July 2026





C3S multi-system seasonal forecast on May - Mean forecast SST anomaly

El Niño is likely to emerge soon (82% chance in May-July 2026) and continue through Northern Hemisphere winter 2026-27 (96% chance in December 2026 – February 2027).

Uncertainty remains regarding the strength of this potential El Niño. It is developing rapidly, and models indicate that it is likely to reach at least moderate intensity, with increasing chances of a stronger event. Its potential intensification will depend on strong ocean–atmosphere interaction, which sustains and amplifies the event through the summer.

Sea surface temperatures (SST) have increased significantly over the past weeks, and further warming is likely. A comparison of C3S forecasts for October 2023 (the previous El Niño) and 2026 indicates that, this year, positive SST anomalies in the Pacific may be both more widespread and more intense. Forecasts in the coming months will be critical to confirm whether this trend will persist and to better understand whether the current El Niño will develop into a strong event

Weak El Nino: Temperature anomalies between +0.5 to +1.0
Moderate El Nino: Temperature anomalies between +1.0 to +1.5
Strong El Nino: Temperature anomalies between +1.5 to +1.9
Very Strong: El Nino Temperature anomalies > +2.0

What are the **climate impacts** of El Niño?

- Tends to **redistribute rainfall**, causing flooding in some regions and drought in others
- **Raise global temperatures**, often contributing to the warmest years on record
- **Increase the likelihood of climate extremes**, such as floods, droughts, heatwaves, and wildfires, and typically suppresses Atlantic tropical cyclone activity while enhancing activity in the Pacific

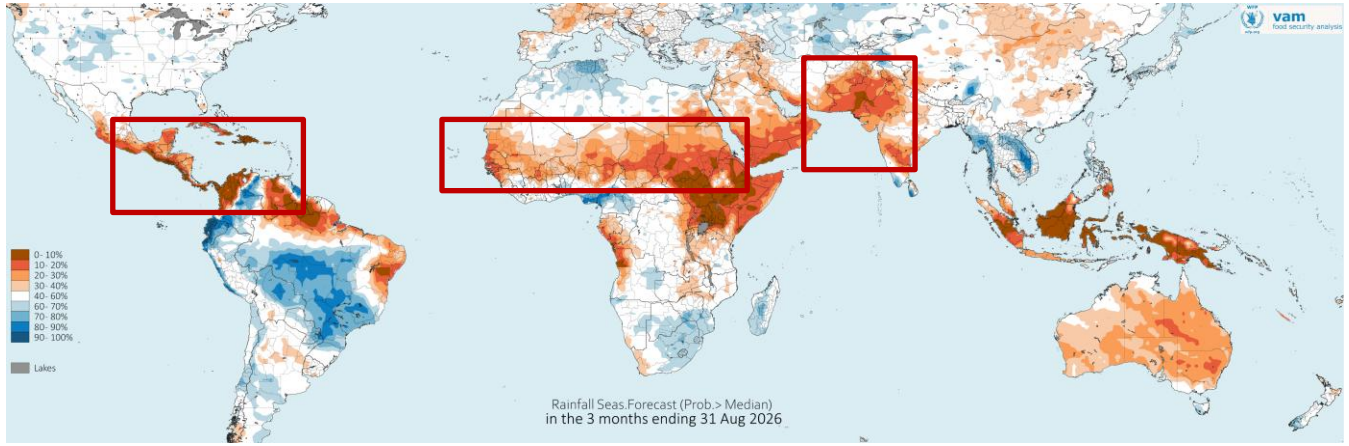
Does **El Niño strength** influence the impact?

- The **relationship between El Niño strength and impacts is not linear**, where even weak events have resulted in severe impact
- Stronger events **do not always translate into greater weather or climate impacts**, but they do make certain impacts **more likely to occur.** ENSO is only one of many factors that can influence seasonal weather and climate.

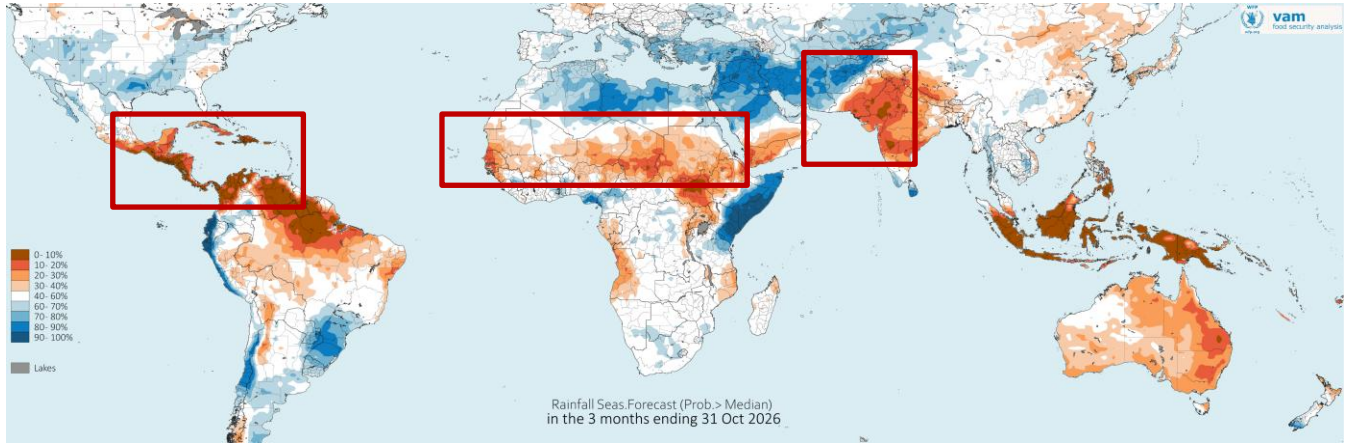
SPECIAL FOCUS

Northern Hemisphere Growing Season and El Nino

Seasonal forecasts confirm conditions consistent with typical El Niño patterns



Source: ECMWF



Rainfall forecast for **Jun –Aug 2026** (above) and **Aug-Oct 2026** (below) as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual condition.

Crop growing seasons are beginning across the Northern Hemisphere, with harvests expected in the autumn period.

El Niño conditions tend to influence climate patterns by bringing drier-than-average conditions across several key agricultural regions, including Central America, the Caribbean, northern South America, the Sahel-to-Ethiopia belt, as well as parts of South Asia such as India and Pakistan.

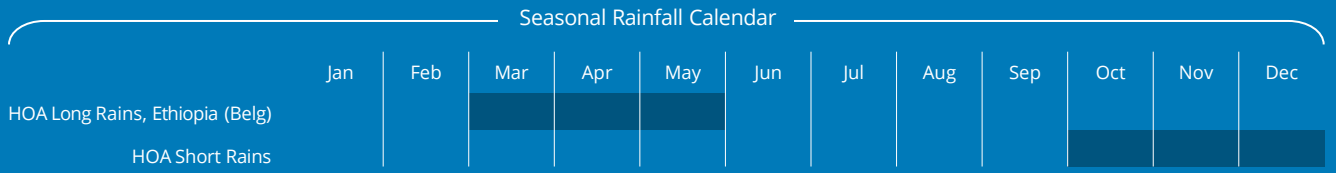
These rainfall deficits can negatively affect planting, crop establishment, and crop development, particularly in rainfed systems, increasing the risk of below-average agricultural production if dry conditions persist.

Current rainfall forecasts for the upcoming season are consistent with the development of El Niño-related patterns across most of the regions. Forecast indicate significant impacts on rainfall distribution in parts of Eastern Africa, notably Sudan and South Sudan, as well as in Central America.

Drier-than-average conditions are expected to persist throughout much of the season, with particularly pronounced deficits likely during the first half of the growing period (Eastern African countries and Central America)

As the season progresses, continued monitoring will be important to confirm these dry conditions and to better understand their implications for agricultural production and food security.

HORN OF AFRICA

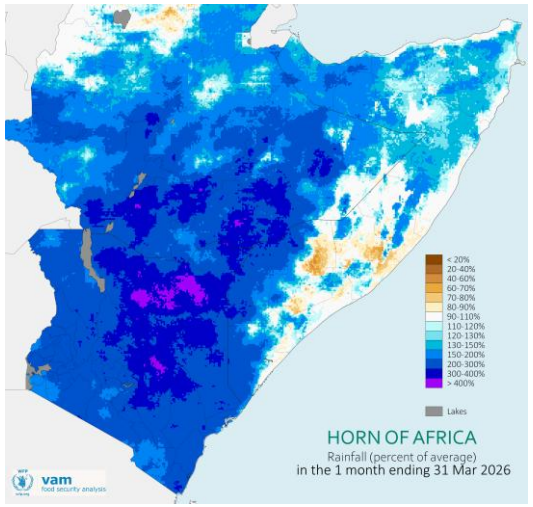


Irregular Rains Raise Concerns in the Eastern Horn

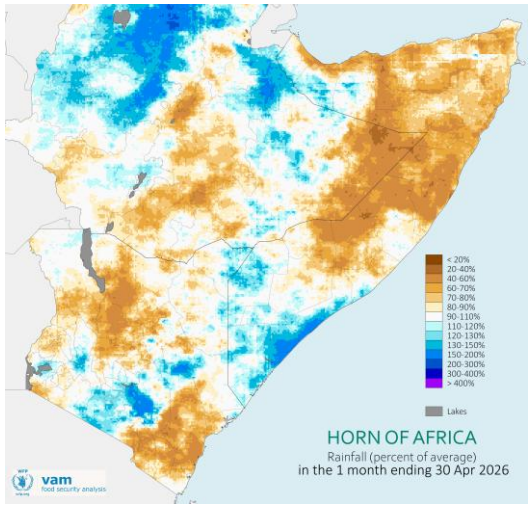
The March–May rains season across the Horn of Africa began with generally favorable rainfall during March across Kenya and southern Ethiopia and most of Somalia, supporting seasonal onset and improving early moisture conditions in several agricultural and pastoral areas. However, rainfall distribution became increasingly uneven during April, with emerging deficits and prolonged dry spells across Somalia, southeastern Ethiopia and parts of Kenya.

Conditions are becoming increasingly concerning across parts of Somalia and eastern Kenya, where dry conditions are expected to persist until the end of May, indicating a deterioration of seasonal conditions during a critical stage of crop development. These conditions may limit pasture regeneration, water availability and crop development in vulnerable pastoral and agropastoral areas where recovery remains fragile following previous poor rainy seasons.

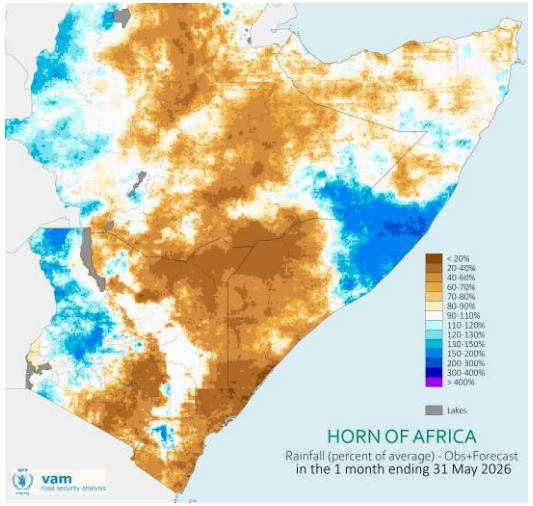
As the season progresses, continued monitoring of rainfall performance and the evolution of dry spells will be essential.



Rainfall observed for the month ending **31 Mar 2026**, as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Rainfall observed for the month ending **30 Apr 2026**, as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month ending **31 May 2026**, as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Southern Africa												

Ongoing Harvest with a Favourable Regional Yield Outlook after a Season of Above-Average Rainfall

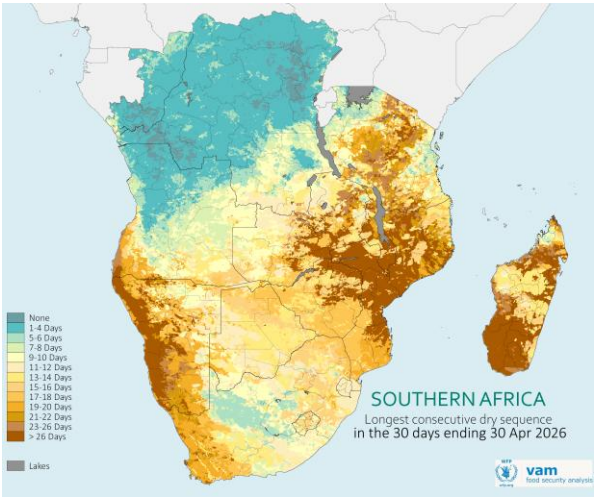
March was characterized by unusually wet conditions, with rainfall well above average across most of the region. Mozambique recorded rainfall totals exceeding the climatological norm by over 120 mm, marking one of the highest monthly totals in the region.

In April, conditions became predominantly dry, consistent with the seasonal transition toward the end of the rainy season. However, parts of central Southern Africa and northern Angola continued to receive above-average rainfall.

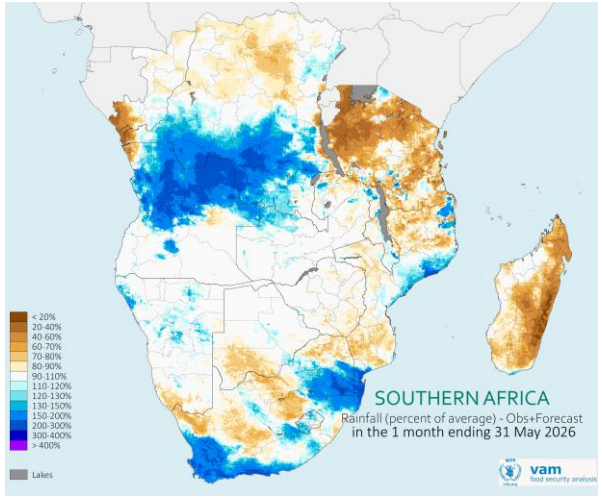
Rainfall from October 2025 to April 2026 was above average across most of the region, although localized deficits persisted in northern Zambia, southern DRC, eastern Angola, and southern Madagascar.

The season was marked by a combination of flooding, successive storms, and mid-season dry spells. Despite these challenges, a favourable regional harvest outlook is expected. Maize harvesting is ongoing, with localized production concerns in Angola, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, while South Africa is expected to record an above-average harvest.

Looking ahead, the likely development of El Niño conditions is expected to result in below-average rainfall during the 2026–27 season, in line with historical patterns observed during similar ENSO phases. Such conditions generally constrain crop development in rainfed systems, with implications for food production and food security.
In this context, early action should be prioritized to ensure timely preparedness, planning, and implementation of mitigation measures.



Longest consecutive dry sequence in the 30 days ending **30 Apr 2026**. Green (brown) shades correspond to short (long) dry spells.



Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 31 May 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.

CENTRAL ASIA

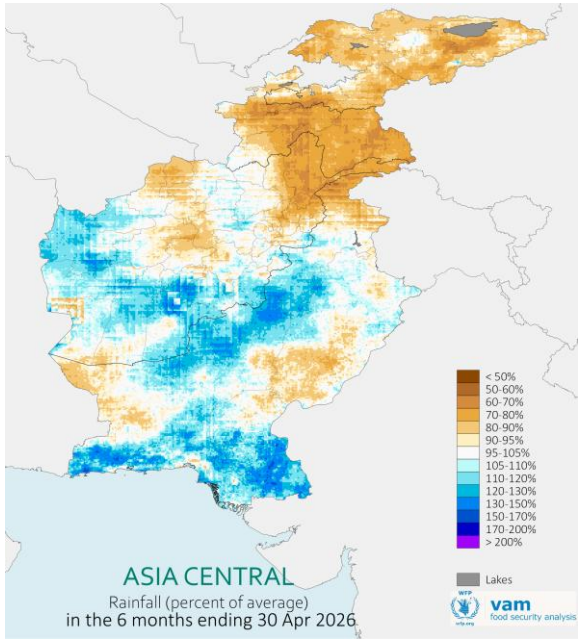
Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Central Asia												

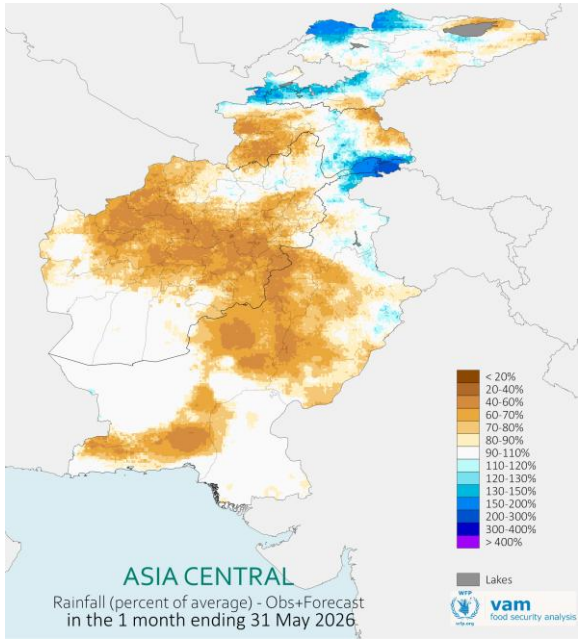
Mixed Seasonal Recovery Under Warm Outlook

The region is approaching the end of the wet season with mixed rainfall performance. Rainfall during March and April improved water availability across much of the region, however, pockets of dryness persist, particularly in some northern areas. Snowpack conditions are also a concern, with below-average snow water availability across most basins, some of which have already reached critically low levels earlier than usual. This indicates increasing pressure on water availability during the upcoming dry season.

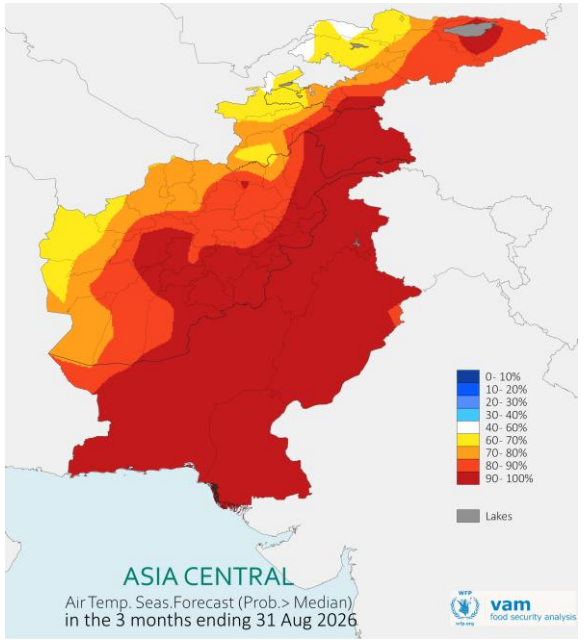
Forecasts suggest a high likelihood of above-average temperatures in the coming months. These conditions are expected to accelerate snowmelt and increase evapotranspiration, potentially reducing water storage later in the season. Accelerated snowmelt may also increase the risk of localized flooding.



Observed Rainfall for the 6-month **until 30 Apr 2026**, as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 31 May 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Temperature forecast for the 3-month periods **Jun -Aug 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely colder (hotter) than usual conditions.

MIDDLE EAST & NORTHERN AFRICA

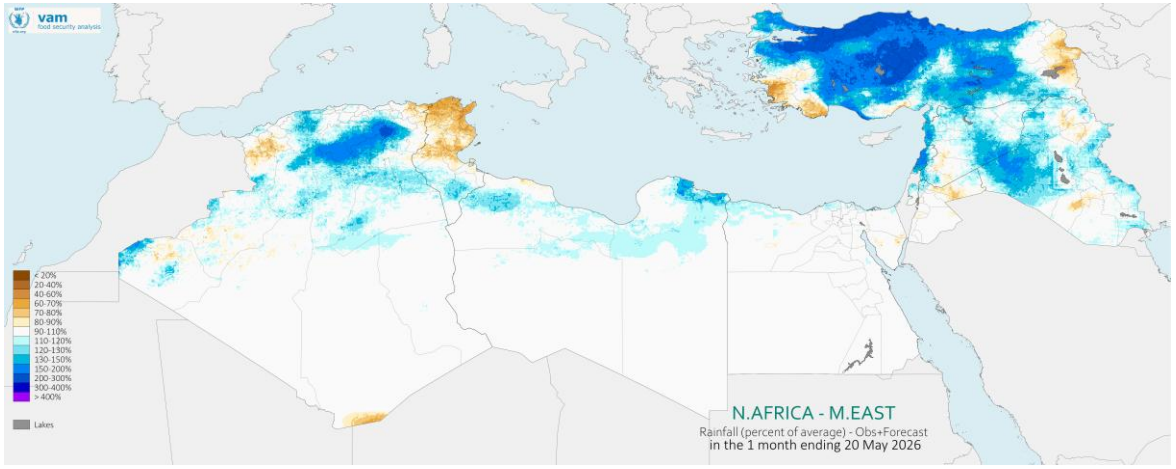
Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
MENA Region												

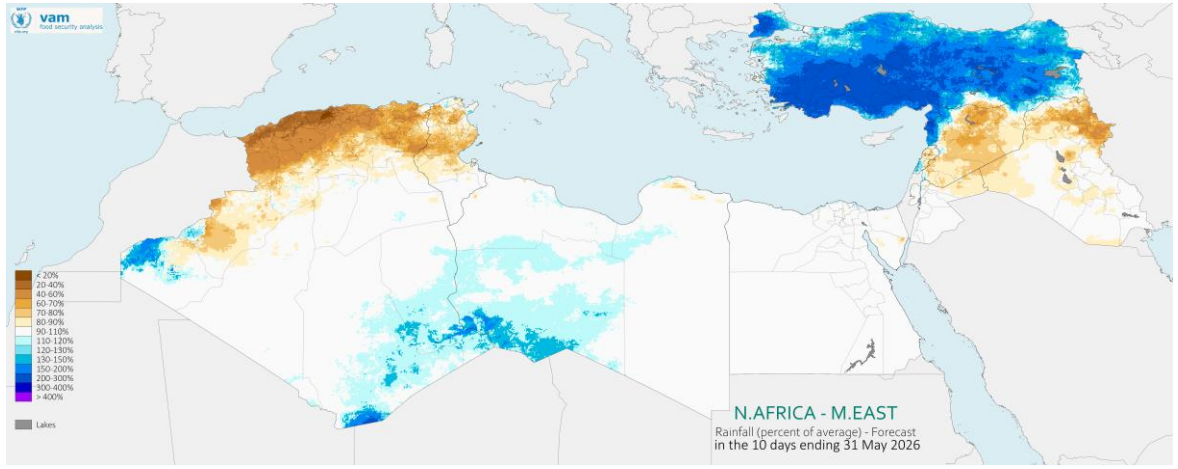
Late-Season Rainfall Improves Conditions with Remaining Localized Deficits

Following a relatively dry start to the winter season, rainfall improved from December onward across much of the Middle East. Above-average rainfall during March and April across northern Iraq, northeastern Syria, southeastern Türkiye supported crop development and improved water availability within the Tigris–Euphrates basin. Localized flooding and waterlogging have occurred in some flood-prone areas, particularly in northern Iraq and northeastern Syria, following repeated heavy rainfall episodes.

In North Africa, growing conditions are generally favourable, with notable improvements following a delayed start to the season. As a result, production prospects across the region are broadly positive.



Rainfall for the 1-month ending **20 May 2026**, as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Rainfall forecast for 10 days ending **31 May 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

EAST AFRICA

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eastern Africa (Sudans and Ethiopia (Meher))				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		

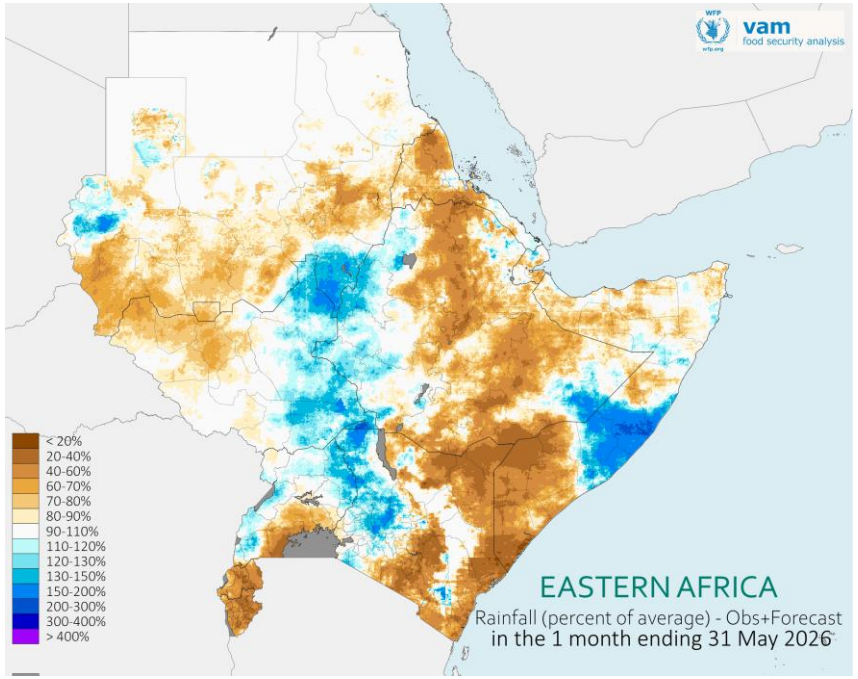
Uneven Start of the Season, Risk of Mid-Season Dryness

Rainfall conditions during April and early May were mixed across Eastern Africa. Above-average rainfall supported seasonal agriculture activities in parts of South Sudan, Ethiopia, and western Kenya. However, below-average rainfall persisted across much of Sudan, north-western South Sudan, and eastern Ethiopia, where deficits continue to affect planting conditions, vegetation growth, and water availability.

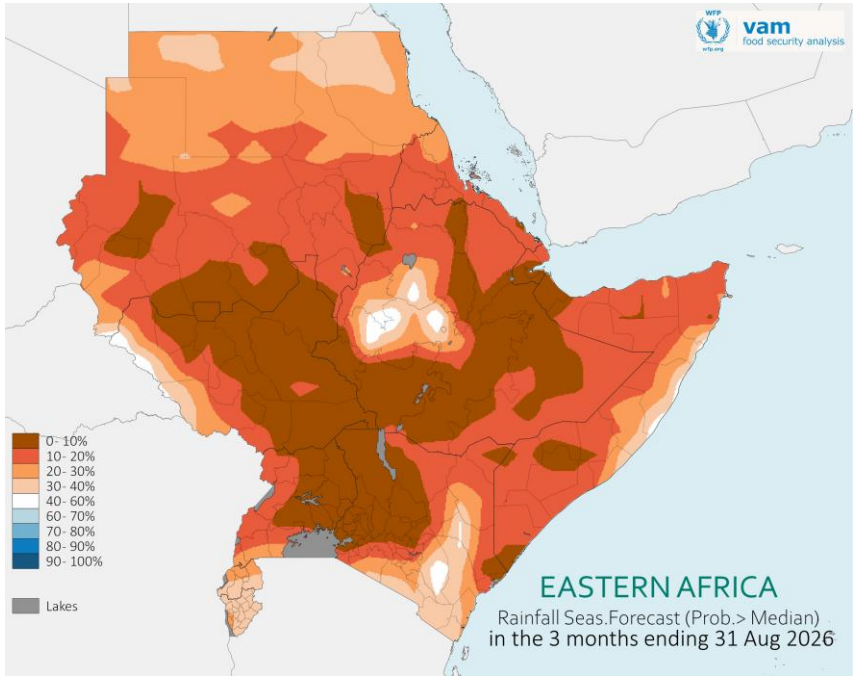
Short-term forecasts indicate continued variability in rainfall distribution, suggesting uneven conditions across the region.

Looking further ahead, seasonal outlooks for June–August indicate an increased likelihood of below-average rainfall across large parts of Eastern Africa, consistent with conditions typically observed during El Niño.

If these conditions materialize, they could have significant impacts on agricultural production and food security. This is particularly concerning in already vulnerable areas, such as Sudan, where cereal production last year was approximately 20% below the five-year average.

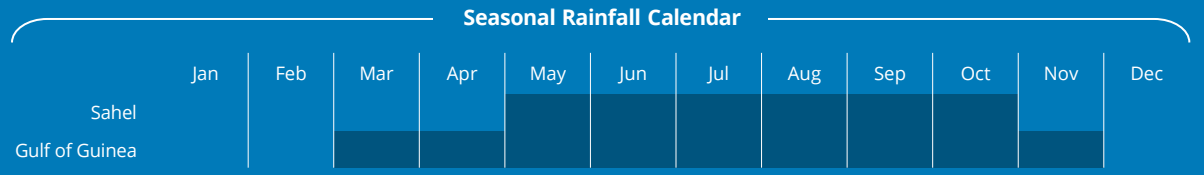


Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 31 May 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month period **Jun-Aug 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

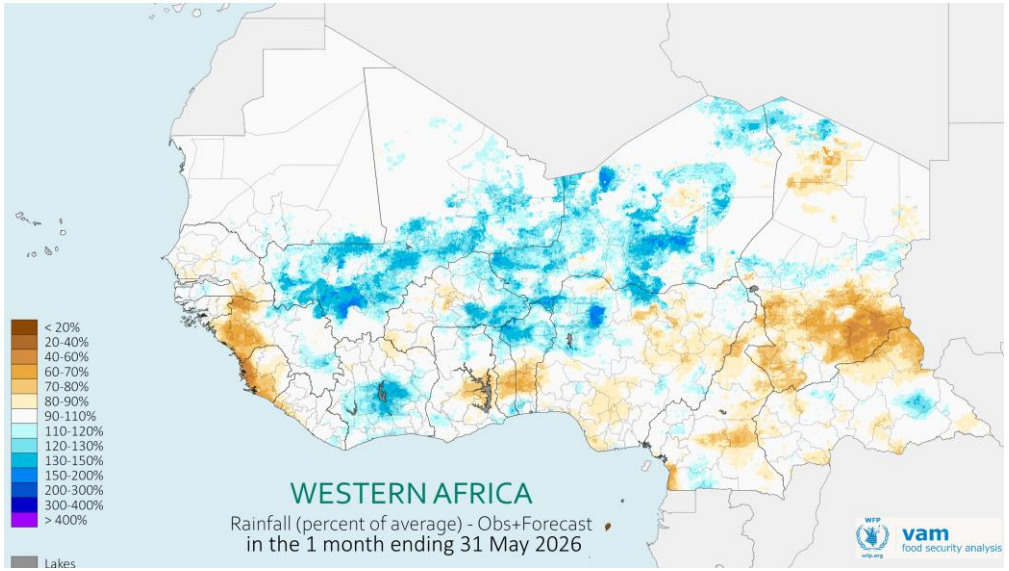
WESTERN AFRICA



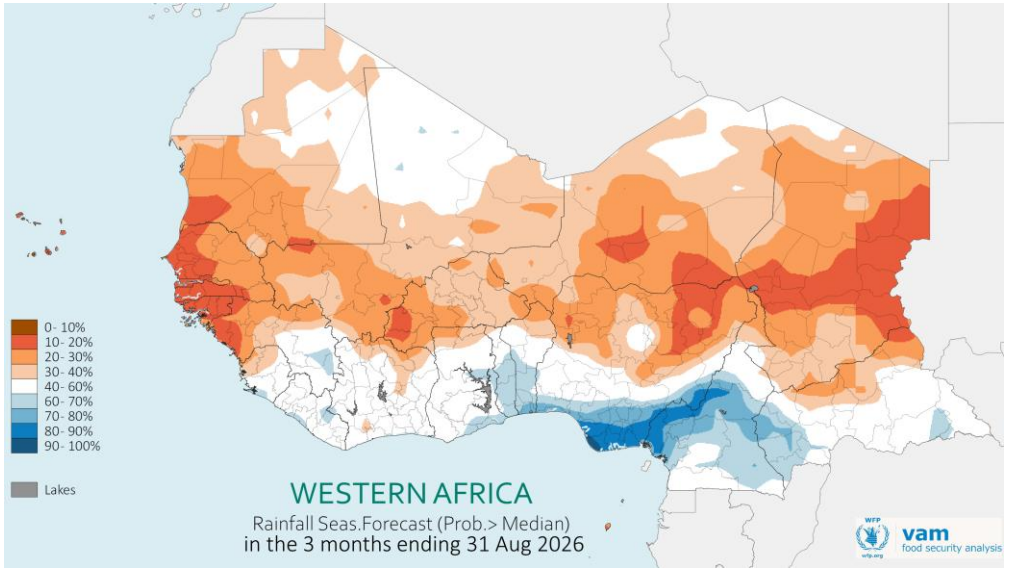
Uneven start of the season with mixed rainfall outlooks

Across the Gulf of Guinea, the start of the rainy season has been irregular. After good rainfall in March, conditions weakened in April, with below-average rainfall spreading across many coastal areas. Forecasts for the end of May suggest a potential recovery, with seasonal outlooks indicating that improved rainfall could support vegetation development, and some areas likely to receive above-average rainfall later in the season.

Across the Sahel, most areas are still in the very early stages of the season. Forecasts for June to August suggest the likelihood of widespread drier-than-average conditions, particularly in parts of Chad, Nigeria, Niger, and the western coastal Sahel. These projected rainfall patterns are broadly consistent with conditions typically observed during the El Niño. Close monitoring of rainfall patterns and monsoon progression will be essential over the coming months.

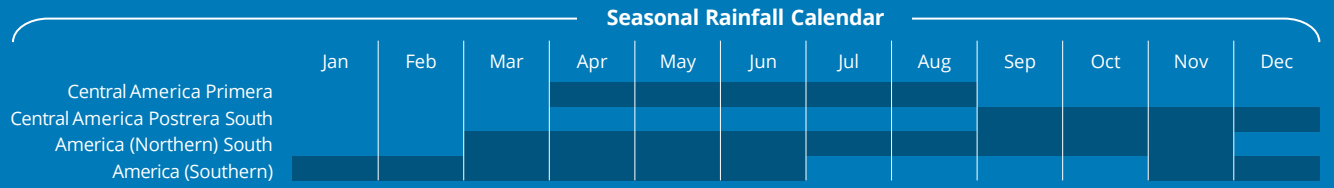


Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 31 May 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month period **Jun-Aug 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

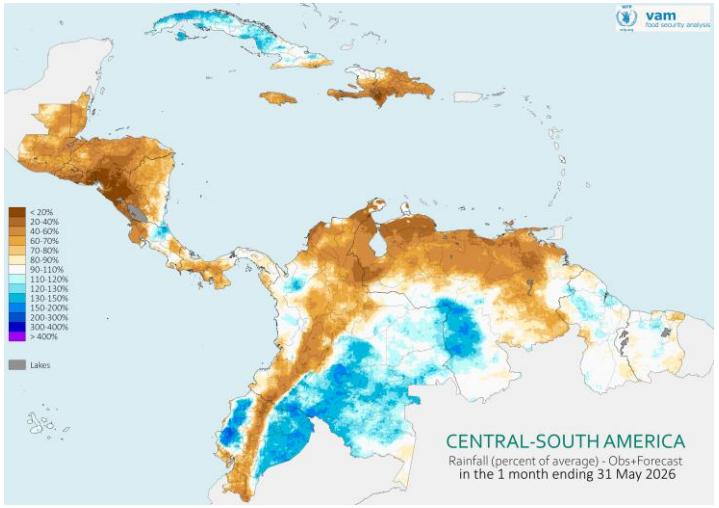
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN



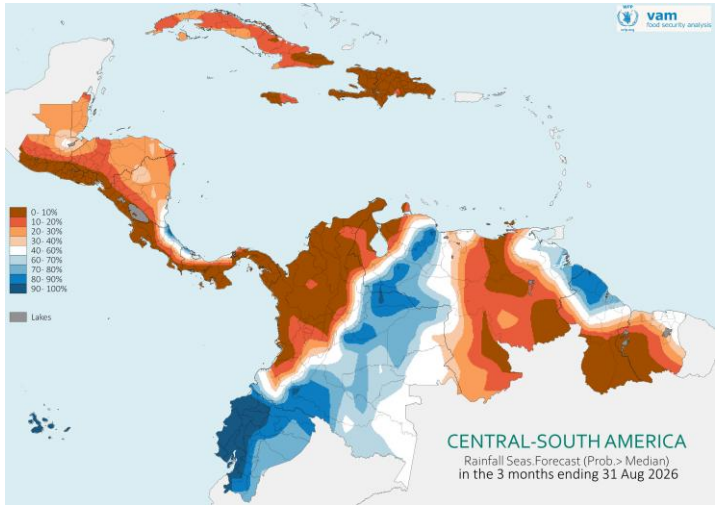
Increasing Dryness Risks Under Emerging El Niño Conditions

Central America and the Caribbean: The Primera season is beginning under a climate pattern influenced by the transition toward El Niño conditions. Recent weeks have already shown signs of below average rainfall across the region, raising concerns for the start of seasonal agricultural activities.
Looking ahead, seasonal outlooks suggest increasing risks of below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures across the region as the Primera season progresses, consistent with typical El Niño patterns. An irregular distribution of rainfall, combined with higher temperatures, could delay planting, reduce soil moisture, and place additional stress on rainfed crops, particularly affecting smallholder farmers in the Dry Corridor. If dry conditions persist through mid-year, the impacts may extend beyond the Primera season, further constraining crop development and potentially delaying the start of the Postrera planting season.

The likely transition toward El Niño may contribute to a less active hurricane season. However, unusually warm sea surface temperatures could still support the development of impactful tropical storms.

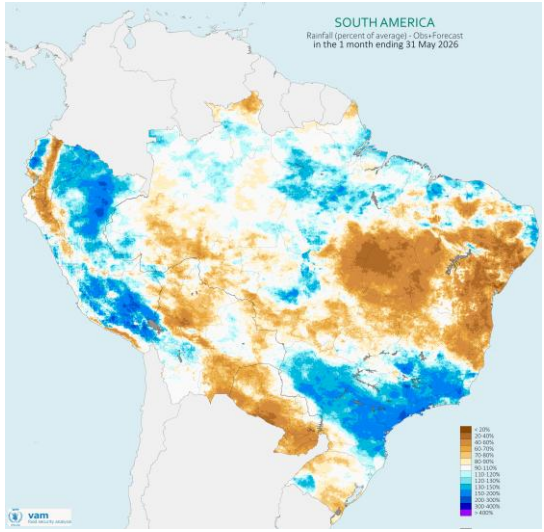


Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 31 May 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.



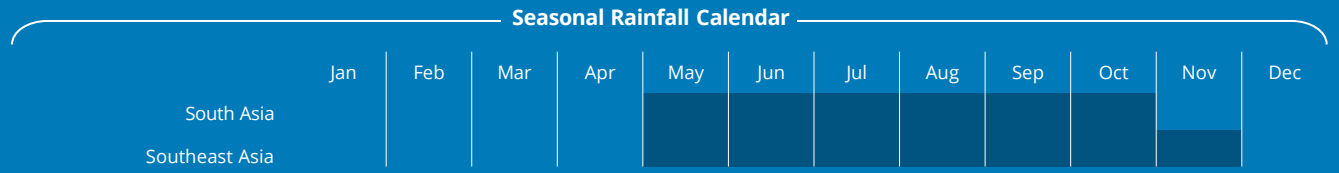
Rainfall forecast for **Jun –Aug 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual condition.

South America: Rainfall conditions across the region have remained highly contrasted in recent months. Persistent above average rainfall across parts of the Andean region has sustained localized floods and landslides risks, while parts of northern and western of the region have experienced rainfall deficits and warmer conditions. Looking ahead forecasts indicate wetter than average conditions may continue across parts of western and southern of the region, while drier conditions are more likely in eastern areas.



Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 20 May 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.

SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA



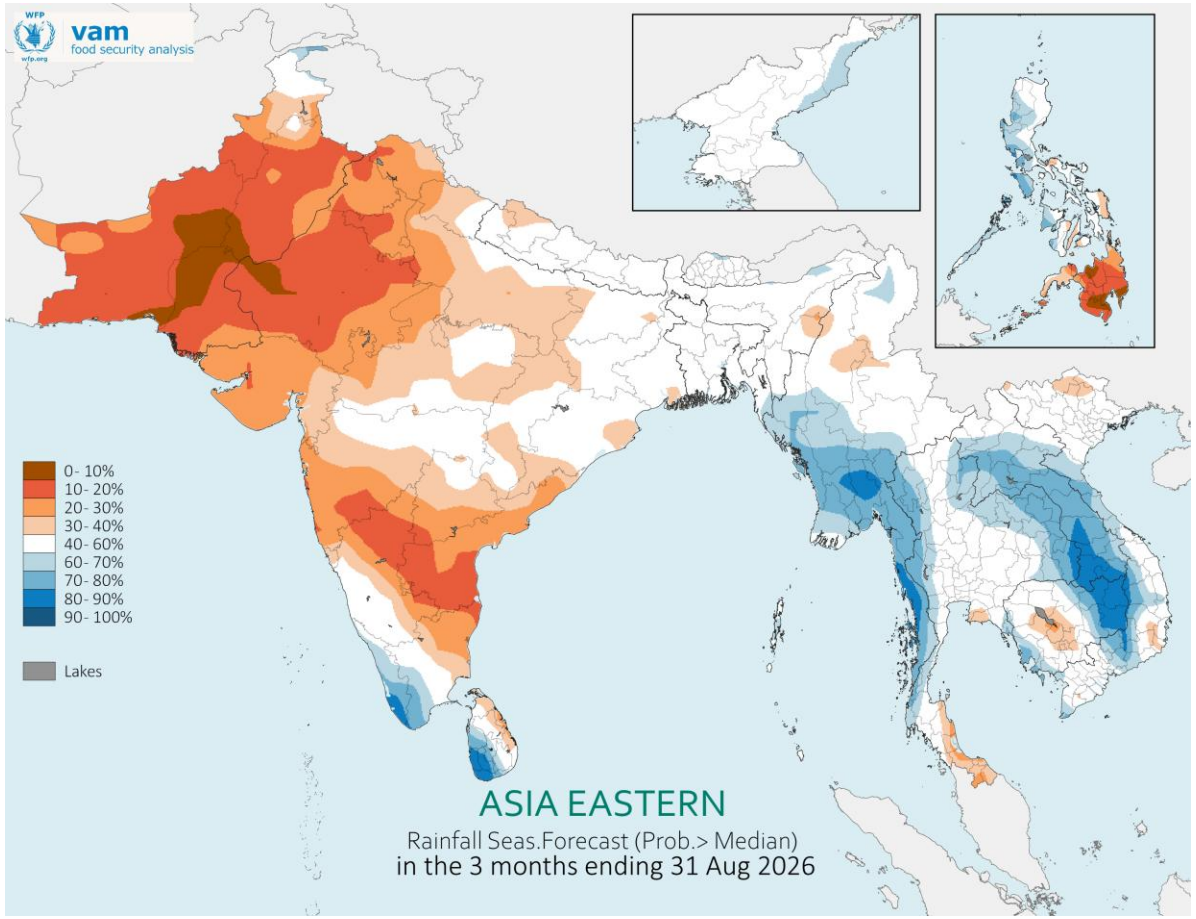
Monsoon Season Begins Amid Rising El Niño Risks

The onset of the monsoon is expected between mid-May and early June, signaling the start of the main agricultural season across South and Southeast Asia.

Across Southeast Asia, forecasts indicate likely normal to above-average rainfall conditions during the first part of the monsoon. These conditions are expected to ensure good planting conditions and promote crop development, particularly for rice.

In contrast, in South Asia, forecasts through August suggest below-average rainfall across parts of central and western India, as well as Pakistan. This pattern is consistent with the typical influence of emerging El Niño conditions, which tend to suppress monsoon activity in these areas. As a result, there is an increased risk of delayed planting and potential impacts on crop production

Emerging El Niño conditions usually lead to a reduction in the number of tropical storms in the region. However, while the total number of storms may not change significantly, El Niño often results in stronger and longer-lasting typhoons.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month periods **Jun -Aug 2026**, as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.c

NOTES

All satellite data (rainfall, vegetation index and land surface temperature) both current and historical are stored and processed at the WFP-HQ Humanitarian Data Cube AWS cloud system.

Rainfall: Primary dekadal data (CHIRPS) from Univ California St Barbara Climate Hazards Centre (https://www.chc.ucsb.edu/data/chirps)
Various accumulations are computed on a dekadal basis and anomalies derived relative to a 25 year-long mean (1994-2018).

Land Surface Temperature: Primary data from MODIS-AQUA (NASA), cloud cleared and gap-filled, both daytime and nighttime images. Thermal amplitude derived from difference between the two. Long term averages 2002-2018 used to derive anomalies

Vegetation Index: Primary data from MODIS-AQUA and TERRA (NASA), cloud cleared and gap-filled. Long term averages 2002-2018 used to derive anomalies

Seasonal Forecast: ECMWF seasonal forecasts **(SEAS5)** | The forecast anomalies are presented as the probability of exceeding the median, indicating the likelihood that seasonal precipitation will be above the median of the 24-year climatological distribution. These anomalies are derived from a 51-member forecast ensemble and are calculated relative to a 24-year model climatology (based on a 25-member ensemble reforecast) spanning 1993–2016

What is ENSO? ENSO is a recurring climate pattern in the equatorial Pacific, alternating between El Niño, La Niña, and Neutral phases. Shifts in ocean temperatures and atmospheric pressure during these phases influence global weather, affecting rainfall, temperatures, and the risk of extremes such as droughts, heavy rains, and tropical cyclones.
(https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/)

Water level in reservoirs: G-REALM data from USDA Foreign Agricultural Service.

Flood Forecast: GLOFAS-Copernicus and GOOGLE Flood Hub

WFP World Food Programme

For further information please contact:

hq.geospatial@wfp.org